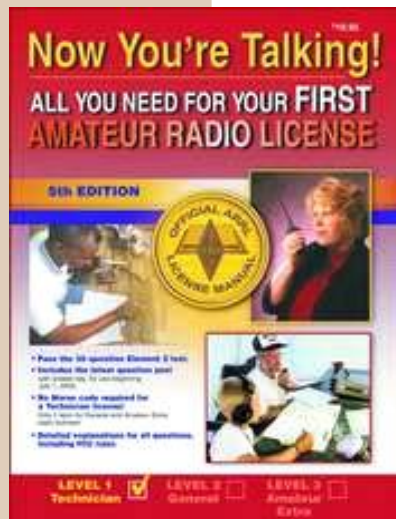


Spark Gap

Volume 23, Issue 2, February 2006



*The Official
Newsletter of the
Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club*



Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club
P. O. Box 836
Franklin, IN 46131
www.midstatehams.org

Technician Classes Begin March 7th

...Ernest Clark, KB9SKI

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club will teach an amateur radio license course. Free weekly classes begin 7:00 PM on Tuesday, March 7, at the Johnson County Emergency Operations Center, 1111 Hospital Road, in Franklin. The course will run for eight weeks and will cover the essentials to pass the examination for the Technician-class

license. Morse Code is not required for this license. Ham radio operators provide vital community assistance during and after natural or man-made disasters. For more information or to register, contact Ernest Clark at 317-889-1931 or hamclass@midstatehams.org.

When everything else fails, ham radio gets through. This was shown in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, in the ruins of the World Trade Center, and this is demonstrated again and again with floods, earthquakes, or massive tornadoes. The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is proud to assist in Johnson County emergency response, and proud to pass on the skills and traditions of ham radio: for service, for fun, and for the improvement of radio technology.

The license classes to begin on March 7 will provide the knowledge needed to pass the examination for the Technician license, the entry-level U.S. amateur radio license. Technicians may use every VHF and UHF amateur band, mode, and legal transmitting power. These are local, line-of-sight frequencies much like those of broadcast TV, FM

radio, and cell phones. Of the 700,000 U.S. radio amateurs, half hold Technician licenses, forming the backbone of both emergency response within the community and everyday fellowship locally on the air or face-to-face. Local clubs operate ham radio repeaters on agreed frequencies for chatting, routine club business, disaster drills, and the occasional genuinely urgent situation. The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club, serving Johnson County and its surroundings, operates the WA9RDF repeater at 146.835 MHz. Several times every year, when severe weather threatens,

the National Weather Service requests that a Skywarn severe weather network be activated for Johnson County on this repeater. When the weather sirens start screaming, quite likely it is because some ham volunteer, trained in weather spotting, has just reported a rotating wall cloud via Skywarn. Tornado coming!

Register Today!

Amateur Radio is not just disaster and emergency preparation; it is a fun hobby (that happens to be uniquely valuable when the phone lines are down, the power is out and the cell phones are jammed). Hams like to talk. Hams talk around the world. Hams communicate by bouncing signals off the moon, hams operate several radio repeaters in earth orbit, hams bounce signals off meteor showers, and hams link local repeaters to each other worldwide via the Internet. Amateur radio is dozens of different specialties, tied together by the use of radio to communicate. For over ninety years amateur radio has been at the forefront of radio, pushing and extending capabilities. The next entry opportunity begins March 7 with the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club.

"Hello" Campaign to Put Friendly, Inviting Face on Amateur Radio

NEWINGTON, CT, Feb 14, 2006—A new ARRL public relations campaign set to launch this April will cast Amateur Radio in the light of the 21st century and focus on its universal appeal, even in today's already technology-rich society. At the same time, the "Hello" campaign will note the 100th anniversary of

what many historians consider the first voice radio broadcast in 1906 by Reginald Fessenden.

"It is quite simply the largest PR campaign that ham radio has ever attempted," says ARRL Media and Public Relations Manager Allen Pitts, W1AGP. Based on the word "Hello," which Pitts calls "possibly the most pleasant word in any language," the coordinated campaign will set "a positive, upbeat tone that highlights the international capabilities of Amateur Radio," he explained.

The "Hello" campaign will aim to reframe Amateur Radio within a contemporary context. "ARRL President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, was correct

in stating that the Main Street of today is not the same as the Main Street of yesteryear," Pitts went on to say. "To reach out today, the very first requirement is that Amateur Radio operators be perceived as friendly and trustworthy. That's a true public relations goal and the prime focus of the campaign."

Pitts says it's not helpful to lament the time in decades past when Amateur Radio grew pretty much on its own, without too much effort on the part of clubs and individuals. "Only our combined, effective action will do that today," Pitts says. "This campaign will give hams the tools they need to reach out in their communities to non-hams and influence their perception of Amateur Radio."

The national "Hello" campaign can bring curious people into contact with ham radio groups, but it will be up to local radio amateurs to make them truly welcome, Pitts maintains.

The "Hello" campaign is designed to gain momentum as the year progresses. Components will include the release of public service announcements for use by radio and TV broadcasters and a video for meetings, presentations and even broadcast. Other highlights will include a "Hello" campaign Web site and special operating events. The high point of the "Hello" campaign will come in December on the centennial of Fessenden's first radio broadcast.

History recalls that the Canadian-born and educated Fessenden, using an early alternator, transmitted the first audio radio broadcast from his laboratory in Brant Rock, Massachusetts. Radio operators aboard ships at sea—tipped off in advance to be listening for something special—were astounded to hear Fessenden's broadcast that included the scientist and inventor playing "O Holy Night" on the violin and reading a Bible passage.

The campaign will show that despite the Internet and other technologies, the possibility of being able to talk with everyday people around the world and sometimes in exotic locales—coupled with the surprise, art and uncertainty of DXing—remains a major attraction for Amateur Radio. The "Hello" campaign also will take advantage of likely FCC action this year to drop the Morse code requirement at least for General class applicants.

"We all say we want to make a change for the better for Amateur Radio and get others interested," Pitts said. "This is the time, this is the chance. Stay tuned! More to come!"



Officers

President:
Scott Coombs,
KC9EKR

Vice President:
Dave Daily,
KB9LOT

Secretary:
Linda Harshbarger,
KC9GCH

Treasurer:
Brenda Haler,
KC9EBL

Repeater Trustee:
Matt Payne,
KB9JUE

Spark Gap Editor:
Bob LaGrange,
N9SIU

Amateur Radio Celebrates 100 Years

Indiana BPL Information State Legislation

The following letter was received by James S. Sellers K9ZBM, Indiana Section Manager

Mr. Sellers,

I want to alert you to BPL legislation that may be added to the telecommunications deregulation bill, Senate Bill 245 in the Indiana House of Representatives. In a committee hearing held yesterday, an amendment to SB 245 was proposed that would promote BPL in Indiana by allowing electric utilities to pass on a large amount of the BPL construction costs to their electricity customers. I objected to the amendment based on interference issues and the cross-subsidy of BPL by electric ratepayers.

The chair of the Technology committee agreed to remove the BPL provision, but reserved the right to propose it as an amendment before the entire house on the 2nd reading of the bill. You may want to alert hams to this possibility so they can contact their representatives.

I expect the bill to be on second reading on Thursday, February 16th.

Matt Pierce, State Representative, District 61, N9VKU

Note: *Contact your local representative to let them know how you stand on this issue.*■

Weather Spotter Classes

Weather Spotter Class will be held at the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN on Wednesday, February 22. Contact Tug Sutton at 317-736-9064 if you plan on attending. Severe Weather Preparedness Week in Indiana is the week of March 5th through March 11th. ■

Revised, corrected Element 2 question pool released (Feb 15, 2006)

The Question Pool Committee (QPC) of the National Conference of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators ([NCVEC](#)) has announced the release of a revised and corrected Element 2 (Technician) question pool. The new Element 2 question pool becomes effective for all Technician-class Amateur Radio examinations administered on or after July 1, 2006. Changes from the initial Element 2 question pool include elimination of some questions (T5D06, T6B09 and T7A08) and rewording of others to increase clarity. "We thank those users who reported the errors and made other suggestions for ways to improve the product," the committee said. "The QPC reviewed all submissions and incorporated the changes that were appropriate." The QPC warned that only the Element 2 question pool dated February 6, 2006, is valid. The new Element 2 database is available for download from the NCVEC Web site as a [PDF](#), [MS-Word](#), Rich Text Format ([RTF](#)) or ASCII [text](#) file. If additional errors are spotted, "subsequent changes will be handled by deletion of the affected question," the committee said. The QPC invites additional input via [e-mail](#). ■

Weather All Day Advanced Spotter Workshop

The National Weather Service in Indianapolis will be hosting an All Day Advanced Spotter Workshop on Saturday, March 18, 2006 at the Creekside Middle School in Carmel, Indiana. Topics will range from the latest research on low topped supercells, bow echo complexes and bow-echo tornadoes to spotter positioning and field equipment used to help assess the environment. Go to the NWS website at www.crh.noaa.gov for more information. ■

**WA9RDF
Repeater
146.835/
146.235 MHz
151.4 Hz PL
Tone**

**Weekly Net
Every Sunday
at 7PM EST**

***Tune in to hear
the ARRL
Newsline!***

Weekly Net

Make sure to check out our weekly net, held every Sunday at 1900 (7 PM) local time.

This is a great chance to meet other local amateur radio operators and test your operating skills.

Newsline is often played, allowing net participants to get the latest news about the amateur radio hobby.

For those without the license or means to check in over the air, we offer an email check-in. Just send an email with your name and contact information to

netcontrol@midstatehams.org, and we will record your check-in!

Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club
P. O. Box 836
Franklin, IN 46131
www.midstatehams.org
317.887.2558

Spark Gap

2006 Schedule of Events

Public Service Events and/or Educational/Testing Opportunities

FEBRUARY 2006

18 **MARC Meeting**

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

22 **2006 Storm Spotters Class**

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

25 **Cabin Fever Hamfest** (LaPorte Amateur Radio Club)

Civic Auditorium, 1001 Ridge Street, LaPorte, IN

MARCH 2006

4 **Mini-Marathon 10K Pre-Race**

Indianapolis, IN (Contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, www.indyhams.org for more info)

14 **Red Cross Disaster Radio Group Meeting**

Red Cross Chapter, Indianapolis, IN

18 **MARC Meeting**

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

18 **Central Indiana Severe Weather Symposium**

Creekside Middle School, Carmel, IN

25 **Columbus HamFest** (Columbus Amateur Radio Club)

Community Building at 4-H Fairgrounds, , State Route 11, Columbus, IN

25 **Spring Fling Hamfest** (Michigan City ARC)

Diamond Cove, 716 US HWY 212, Michigan City, IN

APRIL 2006

11 **Red Cross Disaster Radio Group Meeting**

Red Cross Chapter, Indianapolis, IN

15 **MARC Meeting**

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

15 **Mini-Marathon 15K Pre-Race**

Indianapolis, IN (Contact Mike Palmer, N9FEB, www.indyhams.org for more info)

29 **Johnson County Emergency Management Drill**

Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN

Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the **THIRD SATURDAY** of each month in the basement of the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, Indiana 46131.

See our website, www.midstatehams.org, for maps on how to get to our meeting.